

REMARKS

The last Office Action of March 24, 2005 has been carefully considered. Reconsideration of the instant application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application. Claims 3-11, 13 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 14-19 have been canceled. Claims 20-24 have been added. A total of 16 claims is now on file. The claim surcharge of \$600.00 for submitting three independent claims in excess of three is enclosed. No amendment to the specification has been made.

It is noted that the drawings are objected to because of applicant's failure to show every feature set forth in the claims.

It is further noted that claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,540,064 to Bodenwes et al..

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bodenwes et al. in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,301,778 to Hironaka et al.

It is noted with appreciation that claims 3-5, 7, 9 and 13 are indicated allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

OBJECTION TO THE DRAWING

Applicant has canceled claims 14-19 so that the objection to the drawing becomes moot.

Withdrawal of the objection to the drawing is thus respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Applicant has amended claim 11 to render the subject matter clear and definite. This change is cosmetic in nature and does not narrow the claim element to trigger prosecution history estoppel.

Withdrawal of the rejection of the claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph is thus respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(e) AND 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In view of the Examiner's grounds for rejection, applicant has canceled original claims 1 and 2, and amended original claim 3, as suggested by the Examiner, who indicated that originally filed claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In addition, applicant has rewritten each of the original claims 4, 5, 7, 9 and 13 in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner. Claims 6, 8 and 10 have been amended to change their dependency. Claims 20-24 have been

added and set forth subject matter corresponding to the subject matter of claims 6, 8, 10-12.

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §§102(e) and 103(a) and allowance of claims 3-13, 17-24 are thus respectfully requested.

CITED REFERENCES

Applicant has also carefully scrutinized the further cited prior art and finds it without any relevance to the newly submitted claims. It is thus felt that no specific discussion thereof is necessary.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above presented remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that all claims on file should be considered patentably differentiated over the art and should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner consider necessary or desirable any formal changes anywhere in the specification, claims and/or drawing, then it is respectfully requested that such changes be made by Examiner's Amendment, if the Examiner feels this would facilitate passage of the case to issuance. If the Examiner feels

that it might be helpful in advancing this case by calling the undersigned, applicant would greatly appreciate such a telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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